



CITY OF BOSTON - MASSACHUSETTS

MICHELLE WU
MAYOR

April 10, 2023

TO THE BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors:

I transmit herewith my Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Recommended Budget for the City of Boston. In this moment of urgency and opportunity for our City, our \$4.28 billion FY24 Operating Budget and \$4.2 billion FY24-FY28 Capital Plan sets a foundation for our future, connects our communities, and delivers on the details of City services across our neighborhoods.

For City government, our municipal budget is a public reflection of core principles and a roadmap to invest critical resources. For a City resident, our municipal budget should be the foundation for strong neighborhoods and communities.

Our City budget, for example, invests in almost every part of a young person's day—from the sidewalk they walk on, to the school bus they ride; from the road they travel on, to the street sweeper that cleans it; from the fire station they pass, to the classroom they learn in; from the park where they play, to the community center where they swim; from the library they visit, to the summer job they hold.

While the public conversation for every budget tends to focus on the new investments, it is the billions of dollars of sustained investments that most directly impact our residents and our City. Our ability to sustain and grow these investments stems from strong and stable financial management. Our strong bond rating supports our ability to invest in schools, parks, and streets. We are also seeing revenues rebound as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and our property values remain strong with new growth enabling additional investment.

In total, the Recommended FY24 Operating Budget proposes a year-over-year increase of \$273.7 million or 6.8% over FY23. We are focusing that new investment on five priority areas.

Making Boston First for Families

Boston should be the best place in the country to raise a family, with high quality, supportive programs and facilities accessible to all our residents. This year's budget boosts our investment in Universal Pre-K by \$4 million, which will create over 350 new seats for three- and four-year-olds in Boston. This builds on our \$15.8 million investment in early childhood programs and

educators with federal recovery funds. At the Boston Public Schools, we are investing \$9.6 million to ensure that students with special needs can access services in schools across the district and closer to home. We are advancing our commitment to a multi-billion dollar Green New Deal for Boston Public Schools with \$374 million of planned investments in school buildings. The budget also includes a \$750,000 investment to expand weekly and Saturday hours at Branch Libraries, as well as \$43 million in construction capital for new libraries in Codman Square, Fields Corner, and Egleston Square. To turn our community centers into true community hubs dedicated to enriching Bostonians of all generations, we're investing \$178 million in new capital funding for construction and renovations, and state of good repair for our pools. We will also be investing additional funding toward expanding youth swim lessons and programming for older residents across our neighborhoods.

Supporting a Green & Growing City

The benefits of Boston's growth should be shared across all of our communities, boosting quality of life in our neighborhoods and creating a more resilient City in the face of climate change. To that end, the budget includes \$50 million for the Boston Housing Authority to invest in healthier and more comfortable homes with modern, fossil fuel-free systems, and a \$5 million housing investment to expand the City's voucher program, rental relief, and Boston's accessory dwelling unit program. This will supplement the unprecedented \$234 million investment we've made in safe, healthy and affordable housing with federal recovery funds. The budget proposes adding staff capacity to Parks and Public Facilities so we can work with communities to design and build on a faster schedule, and \$750,000 for investments that add trees and green infrastructure in place of paved surfaces. To reduce our emissions, we are adding new staff to expand efforts around BERDO, helping to reduce building emissions, and investing \$1 million to install electric vehicle charging stations in publicly-accessible locations to help residents switch to zero carbon emission vehicles. We have included \$550,000 to support \$5 Bluebike passes for 10,000 residents, expanding Bluebike usage and encouraging mode shift, plus \$1.4 million to introduce electric Bluebikes across the system. We also include \$84 million in new capital funds to support the creation, reconstruction, and maintenance of parks across the City and \$58 million in new capital funds for public transit, sidewalk improvements, and City infrastructure that supports walking and biking.

Ensuring Public Health & Public Safety

We are investing in public health, equity, and building community trust as core tenets of our approach to strengthening public safety. Focusing on community safety in Boston Housing Authority sites, this budget adds \$1.2 million in violence prevention and public safety staffing. The Police Department will also add \$582,000 to the successful Youth Connect Program, where social workers work in police stations to connect youth to services and support. The budget includes a \$3.3 million investment to keep critical low threshold housing sites open through the fiscal year. For our first responders, this budget includes \$28 million in new funding for firehouses and equipment in the Fire Department, and staff for EMS to maintain response times. And to improve safety on our streets, the budget includes \$30 million in new funding to redesign our roads with a focus on safety by slowing car speeds and improving pedestrian-centered infrastructure.

Closing the Racial Wealth Gap

In order to close the racial wealth gap in Boston, we must transform the policies and programs that have allowed it to persist. This budget includes a \$500,000 investment to train Boston residents, particularly from underrepresented communities, for careers in the the life sciences sector. Another \$250,000 will support business in new areas, building off of landmark investments in neighborhood businesses now underway, including the \$9 million SPACE grant to help small business owners secure new storefront space and \$3.7 million to strengthen our Main Streets. It also adds staff in the City's Supplier Diversity Office to help businesses owned by women and people of color more easily access City contracts. These staff will supplement a \$9 million investment from federal recovery funds focused on the growth of minority- and women-owned businesses.

Delivering Exceptional City Services

Boston should be the standard for delivering exceptional constituent services—on the streets of our neighborhoods, virtually, and at City Hall. Our residents are essential partners in all that we do; which is why we are investing \$6 million to upgrade the City's 311 system, to provide a higher level of service to every resident who contacts City Hall. We are also expanding staffing—from additional staff at the City Registry, more electrical inspectors at ISD, and increased language access support for the Commission for People with Disabilities and the Office of Emergency Management—to improve constituent services across our departments. To build pipelines to careers in City government, the budget expands capacity for recruiting and professional development and establishes new tracks at our City Academy for residents interested in becoming bus drivers or working in wastewater management.

We are also investing in our public buildings and public spaces. Our five-year capital plan includes \$147 million to keep our bridges, stairs, and walking paths in a state of good repair, \$64 million to improve the quality of our sidewalks and continue the installation of ADA curb ramps on every intersection in the City, and \$94 million in additional capital funding for improvements to our central facilities including City Hall and the Plaza. Moreover, to maintain the condition of these assets, we are investing \$1.5 million to increase maintenance capacity at Property Management, as well as to conduct a comprehensive facilities assessment and implement an asset management system for the City.

The investments in these priority areas, coupled with the sustained investments in numerous programs across the City will help us deliver on the more equitable, vibrant, and resilient City our residents deserve. I look forward to the continued partnership of the City Council in this budget process and beyond. I respectfully request your favorable action on the FY24 Operating Budget and the FY24-FY28 Capital Plan.

Sincerely,



Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston